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Foreword

THE AUTHOR OF THIS BOOK has already made a name for herself for her valuable contributions to the literature of analytical psychology. Here she tells of those strange tales that, because they incur the odium of superstition, are generally exchanged only in secret. In this instance they were brought to light by a questionnaire sent out by the *Schweizerischer Beobachter,* which can thereby claim to have rendered no small service to the public. The mass of material that came in arrived first at my address. Since my age and my ever-growing preoccupation with other matters did not allow me to burden myself with further work, the task of sorting out such a collection and submitting it to psychological evaluation could not have been placed in worthier hands than those of the author. She had displayed so much psychological tact, understanding and insight in her approach to a related theme—an interpretation of E. T. A. Hoffmann's story "The Golden Bowl"[1]—that I never hesitated in my choice.

Curiously enough, the problem of wonder tales as they are currently told has never been approached from the psychological side. I naturally don't count mythology, although people are generally of the opinion that mythology is essentially history and no longer happens nowadays. As psychic phenomena of the present, mythological themes are considered only a hunting-ground for eccentrics. Nevertheless, ghost stories, warning visions, and other strange happenings are constantly being reported, and the number of people to whom something once "happened"

[1] "Bilder und Symbole aus E. T. A. Hoffmanns Märchen 'Der Goldene Topf'," in C. G. Jung, *Gestaltungen des Unbewussten,* Zürich, 1950.

is surprisingly large. Moreover, despite the disapproving silence of the "enlightened," for some time now "parapsychology" has been accepted as a serious science. This fact may have helped to encourage the popular response to the questionnaire.

One of the most notable things that came to light is the fact that among the Swiss, who are commonly regarded as stolid, unimaginative, rationalistic and materialistic, there are just as many ghost stories and such as, for instance, among the English or Irish. Indeed, as I know from my own experience and that of other investigators, magic as practised in the Middle Ages and much remoter times has by no means died out, but still flourishes today as rampantly as it did centuries ago. One doesn't speak of these things, however. They simply happen, and the intellectuals know nothing of them—for intellectuals know neither themselves nor people as they really are. In the world of the latter, the life of the centuries lives on, and things that have accompanied human life from time immemorial continue to happen: premonitions, foreknowledge, second sight, hauntings, ghosts, return of the dead, bewitchings, sorcery, magic spells, etc.

Naturally enough our scientific age wants to know whether such things are "true," without taking into account what the nature of proof would have to be and how it could be furnished. The events in question must be looked at squarely and soberly, and then it generally turns out that the most exciting stories vanish into thin air; what remains is "not worth talking about." Nobody thinks of asking the fundamental question: What is the real reason why the same old stories are experienced and repeated over and over again, without losing any of their prestige? On the contrary, they return with their youthful vitality constantly renewed, fresh as on the first day.

The author has made it her task to take these tales for what

they are, *psychic facts,* and not to pooh-pooh them because they do not fit into our scheme of things. She has therefore logically left aside the question of truth, as has long since been done in mythology, and instead has tried to inquire into the psychological questions: Exactly *who* is it that sees a ghost? Under what psychic conditions does he see it? What does a ghost signify when examined for its content, i.e., as a symbol?

She understands the art of leaving the story just as it is, with all the trimmings that are so offensive to the rationalist. In this way the *twilight atmosphere* that is so essential to the story is preserved. An integral ingredient of any nocturnal, numinous experience is the dimming of consciousness, the feeling that one is in the grip of something greater than oneself, the impossibility of exercising criticism, and the paralysis of the will. Under the impact of the experience reason evaporates and another power spontaneously takes control—a most singular feeling which one willy-nilly hoards up as a secret treasure no matter how much one's reason may protest. This, indeed, is the uncomprehended purpose of the experience—to make us feel the overpowering presence of a mystery.

The author has succeeded in preserving the total character of such experiences, despite the refractory nature of the reports, and in making it an object of investigation. Anyone who expects an answer to the question of parapsychological truth will be disappointed. The psychologist is little concerned here with what kind of facts can be established in the conventional sense; all that matters to him is whether a person will vouch for the authenticity of his experience regardless of all interpretations. The reports leave no doubt about this; moreover in most cases their authenticity is confirmed not only by the freedom with which they were reported, but also by independent parallel stories. Since it cannot

be doubted that such reports are found at all times and places, there is no sufficient reason for doubting the veracity of individual reports. Doubt is justified only where it is a question of a deliberate lie. The number of such cases is increasingly small, for the authors of such falsifications are too ignorant to be able to lie properly.

The psychology of the unconscious has thrown so many beams of light into other dark corners that we would expect it to elucidate also the obscure world of wonder tales eternally young. From the copious material assembled in this book those conversant with depth psychology will indeed gain new and significant insights which merit the greatest attention. I can recommend it to all who know how to value things that break through the monotony of daily life with salutary effects, that (sometimes!) shake our certitudes and lend wings to the imagination.

August 1957

C. G. JUNG

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APPARITIONS AND PRECOGNITION

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APPARITIONS AND PRECOGNITION

A STUDY FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF C. G. JUNG'S ANALYTICAL PSYCHOLOGY

BY ANIELA JAFFÉ